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# Flin Flon:

A northern community

University Of Alberta



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# Flin Flon



*A sample study of a northern  
community*

*An inductive approach*

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general editor  
Evelyn Moore

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# UNIT I: INTRODUCTION

Look at the aerial photograph in figure 1. It shows the town of Flin Flon, in northern Manitoba. You will be learning much about Flin Flon and the country

around it. After you have studied the photograph, you will already know some things about the town.

FIGURE 1.



## QUESTIONS:

1. Can you see the copper smelter and the zinc plant, pouring their smoke across the town?
2. Pick out the railway tracks. What do you think the railway is used for in Flin Flon?
3. You could make a guess at how many people live in Flin Flon. How? Try counting the houses and multiply by four or five.
4. Would this be accurate? Where could you find a more exact number?
5. Are there more or less people in Flin Flon than in your community?

FIGURE 2.



FIGURE 3.



### *Meet the Mayor*

Figure 2 is a drawing of Jack Freedman, the mayor of Flin Flon. The town of Flin Flon only began in 1927. So, do you think that Jack could have been born in Flin Flon?

Some of the first Flin Flonners are shown in figure 3. Can you see Jack Freedman among them?

Jack's first job in Flin Flon was selling Winnipeg newspapers to men like these. Why would they want to buy Winnipeg newspapers? What else would they need to buy? Why would they have come to live in tents in the north?

Just in case you don't know where Flin Flon is, find it on the map of Canada. Is Flin Flon really very far north? How

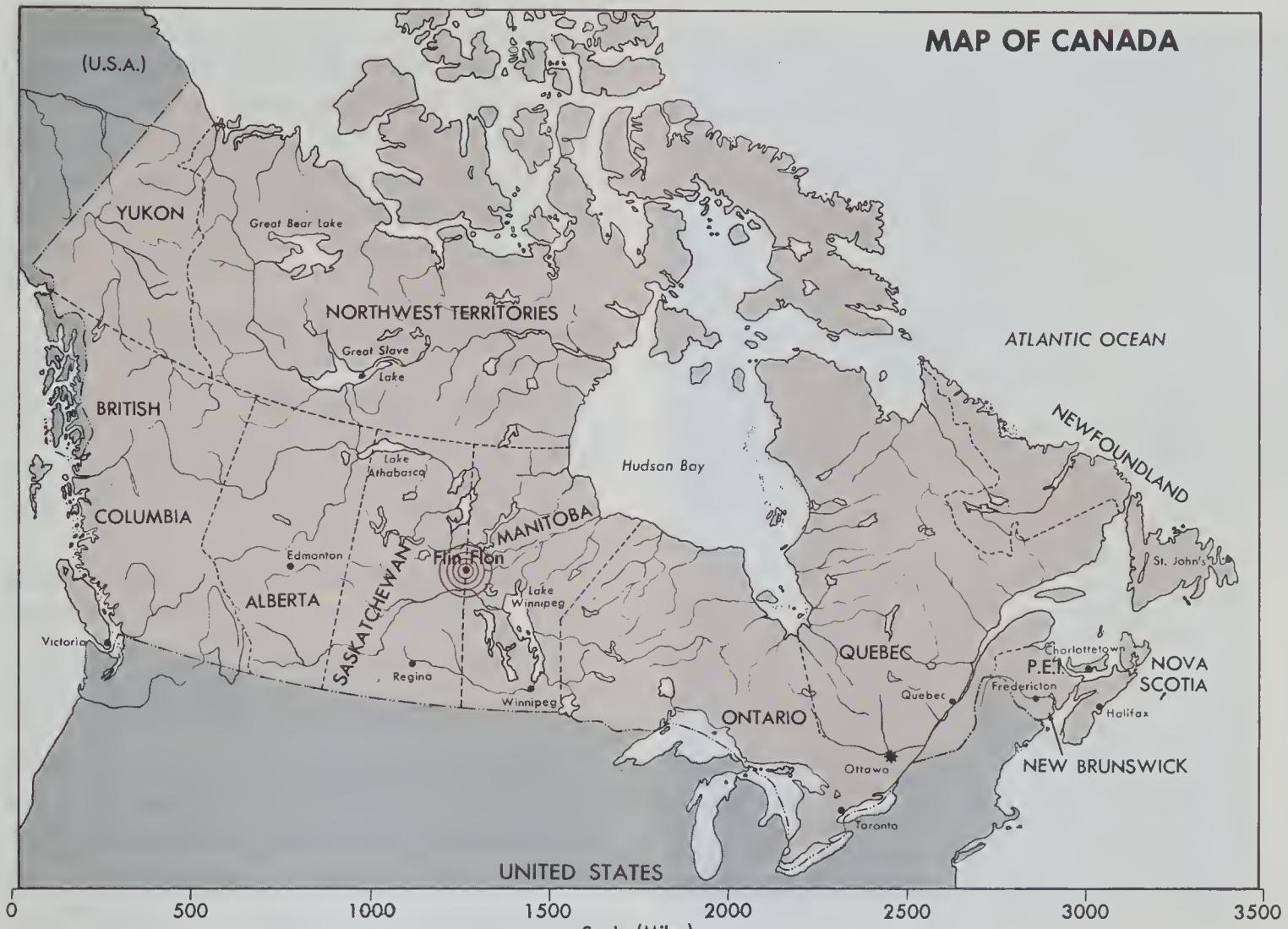


FIGURE 4.

far is it from Winnipeg? How far is it from the North Pole; from the Arctic Circle?

### *A story about Jack Freedman*

Jack Freedman was born in London, England, where his father owned a small store. Jack was adventurous, and came to Canada as a young man in 1908. He found his first job on the docks of Montreal; then he moved to Winnipeg. There

he heard about the new mining town of Flin Flon, persuaded the Winnipeg newspapers to make him their agent, and caught one of the first trains into the new town in 1929.

He got off the train, took one look around, and decided, "This is where I'll stay!" Very soon he had rented a small store for 50¢ a month, and not long afterwards built the store you can see in our picture. Jack is a very friendly and talkative man. All the miners would



FIGURE 5.

gather in “The House that Jack Built” to gossip, discuss their problems, cash their pay cheques, smoke their pipes, and just while away the time.

As the town grew, other stores appeared and there were other places to sit and talk. But the Flin Flonners have always had a soft spot in their hearts for the cigar-smoking “old-timer,” and in 1952 Jack was elected mayor of the town.

In figure 5, you see a photo of Jack Freedman’s store. In a small community, as Flin Flon was in its early years, what else would Jack Freedman’s store be besides a place to buy things? Could this help to explain why he was later chosen by the Flin Flonners as their mayor?

#### QUESTIONS:

1. Do you know who runs your community? Find out all you can about

him (or her) and put together a short life story. Is the story at all like Jack Freedman’s? Why do you think he was chosen to lead your community? Do you think it was a good choice?

#### *Growing up in Flin Flon*

Figure 6 shows some young hockey players.

1. How old do you think the children are in this picture?
2. How old must you be to play in a hockey team in your community?
3. Who organizes young people’s hockey games in your community?

A long time ago, the people of Flin Flon realized that a town isn’t a town unless it looks after its most important people, the

FIGURE 6.



young people. A full-time Community Organizer was hired, and Mr. Pinkie Davie liked his job so much that he stayed at it for 26 years.

Does your community have an organizer for games and sports? What kinds of activities would you organize if it were your job?

Pinkie Davie decided to make use of winter instead of fighting it. First to come were the junior hockey teams, the "Midgets," who begin playing when they are nine. He wanted everyone to get a chance to play, so the box would always be filled to overflowing with would-be Bombers. Each time the buzzer rang, a completely new squad would take to the ice, and you didn't get to play again until everyone had had a turn. Maybe this is the secret of Flin Flon's fearsome hockey players?

Some lakes around Flin Flon are quite warm enough for swimming in the summer (see figure 7). Would these be deep or shallow?

Summer is the time when the Flin Flon Guides and Scouts take to the woods; who wants to go to California!

There are also figure-skating and skiing classes, after-school gymnastics and country dancing, ballet classes, a Glee club, and you can play volleyball or basketball. The new Community Centre has a big basketball gymnasium, where school children from Flin Flon take on visiting teams.

#### QUESTIONS:

1. Why might it be better to have a full-time Community Organizer than

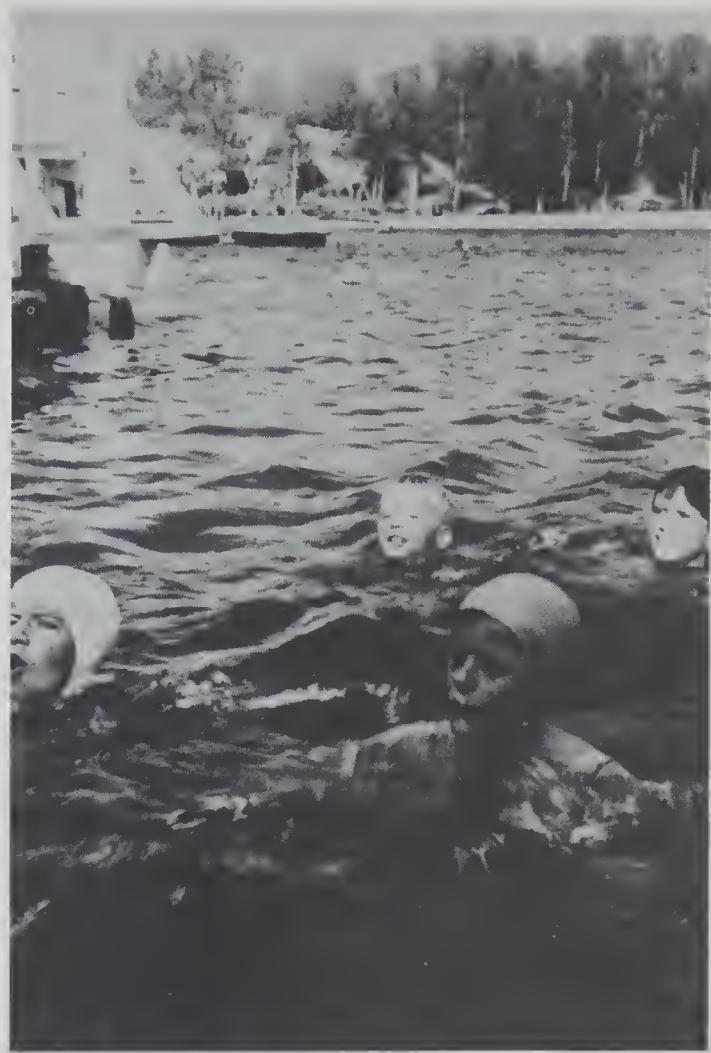


FIGURE 7.

to rely on volunteers, no matter how keen they may be?

2. What things can you do that children in Flin Flon can't? What things can they do that you can't? We'll try to answer these questions again at the very end of our book.

#### THINGS TO DO:

1. Make a list of all the things you can do in your community, and then see

if you can make suggestions for new things to do.

2. Look at your list of activities, and mark off those that are just for boys, those that are just for girls, and those that are for both. Check the list of events in the Olympic Games to see if you are right.

## *Meet a prospector*

### *QUESTIONS:*

Figure 8 shows a picture of a prospector.

1. What do you think he does for a living?
2. Why is this one wearing his old clothes?

FIGURE 8.



3. Of what, do you imagine, might he be dreaming?

Now turn to figure 9, which shows a diamond drilling rig. This doesn't mean that the men are drilling for diamonds, but that the tip of the drill has sharp diamonds on it. Your encyclopedia can tell you more about this.

1. Why does the tip have diamonds on it?
2. Why do you think they are drilling a hole?
3. How did they know where to drill the hole?

FIGURE 9.



## *An interview with Mr. Murray*

The two pictures, figures 8 and 9, tell the story of almost any mining town. It all begins with a prospector finding a rich "strike." There are still thirty full-time prospectors living in Flin Flon, so we decided to talk to one.

It was quite cool outside, about 50 below. We were chatting to Jack Murray over a cup of coffee in the modern Flin Flon Hotel. His steel-coloured eyes seemed as though they wouldn't miss even the smallest sign of minerals anywhere in Manitoba; they softened a little as he told us about his years as a miner.

"Oh, I've worked in iron in Gloucestershire. That was the Forest of Dean. A good bunch of guys when you get to know them. Then I mined for lead in Cumberland, up near Ullswater, and for iron again in Wearsdale. In Durham. And I was quarrying in Wales. They could really sing."

With a quick glance at the icy fog outside, we asked him if he ever went out looking for minerals in the winter.

"Well, we usually go out in two's, winter and summer. Sometimes we're out in the bush for months. It's in the summer that we look around, but there's plenty to do in winter; we have to work on our claims then."

"Doesn't that cost money?"

"Yes, sometimes we need financial backing to develop a claim," Jack replied, "so sometimes we get paid by a company. Then they've got an interest in what we find. I've got my own geophysical equipment though, and my own drill."

We asked if that meant you couldn't be a prospector unless you had a lot of money.

"Oh no, you could rent all that stuff." He stopped for a minute or two, and seemed to be wondering whether to say it or not. "You know," he finally said, "I think the Indians should be trained to be prospectors. Maybe they would be the best."

We thought of the lonely prospectors, trudging along through the trackless forests or padding their canoe for weeks along the banks of an unexplored lake, and asked; "But surely, you couldn't get married and settle down if you are out for weeks at a time?"

He laughed. "Oh, but I did. We've got twelve children!"

We talked on and on, late into the evening. "Once I went prospecting around Churchill, up near the tree line. And then, another time, I went south, near Dauphin, looking for manganese and phosphates. . . ." More cups of coffee. "Then there's clay. I've got the finest quality clays you could want. There was this German feller, out of Winnipeg. I was working underground with him, here in Flin Flon. Putting together a grub-stake for the next summer. He wanted some fine clays to manufacture face cream. . . . Phosphates? I know where there's phosphates. . . ."

### *QUESTIONS:*

1. Why do you think a prospector searches for new finds in summer and works on his claim in winter?

2. Why do you think prospectors prefer to work in groups of two or more?
3. Why do you think some people enjoy being prospectors? Why would you expect to meet them in Flin Flon?
4. If you are interested, find out what phosphates and manganese are used for.
5. Is finding some mineral ore the same as finding a mine?
6. Look at figure 10 and describe what is happening.
7. Do you think you might see this today?
8. What words in Jack Murray's story tell you that prospectors use modern methods today?

#### *THINGS TO DO:*

1. On a map of the British Isles, find some of the places Jack Murray lived in: the Forest of Dean, Wales, Durham and Cumberland. Shade in all the land above, say, 500 feet. What do these areas have in common? Is this like Flin Flon, or Thompson?
2. Make a list of all the things you would take along if you went out prospecting one summer.

FIGURE 10.



## *A story about Flin Flon and another prospector*

Find out who draws the comic strip shown in figure 11. He also designed a famous statue in Manitoba (figure 12).

Look carefully at this statue. How could you guess it was designed by the man who draws Li'l Abner? What is the man shown in the statue doing? What do you think he is looking for?

### *A story about Flin Flon*

There is a story that goes with the statue, and everybody in Flin Flon knows it by heart. Perhaps they even dream about it. It goes something like this:

Once upon a time [you've heard that part before] there was a grocer in New York called Mr. Josiah Flintabatey Flonatin. A keen member of an amateur science club which

FIGURE 11.

Li'l Abner Cartoon



FIGURE 12.

knew of a bottomless lake, he decided to build a special one-man submarine and investigate. Down and down he went, until he came to the middle of the earth where he found that everything was made of solid gold: the floors, the roof, the walls, the houses ... everything! He was surprised and captured by the inhabitants who were ruled by their women, who had whiskers. Gold was so common, and other metals so rare, that they used tin and iron for money. Flin Flon soon found he could speak their language, for it was English spelled backwards. Sti ysae, yrt ti.

Flin Flon was already 45, but this was quite young to the people of Esnesnon, who lived to be 300. So all the ladies had their eye on this nice young man, especially the princess, who weighed twice as much as our hero. Ti saw emit ot evael, kciuq. When he escaped to the surface, of course everyone had forgotten him, and there was just a monument to show where he had disappeared. And nobody would believe his tale. Would you?

The story was written in 1905, in England, by a little-known writer called J. E. Preston-Muddock. A prospector called Tom Creighton had found a tattered copy of the book in 1913, while working near Churchill; it helped to pass away the time, for prospectors are great readers. Two years later, Tom and four friends were prospecting near present-day Lake Flin Flon. Tom was out hunting for a juicy moose when he fell through the ice and got drenched in the lake. While

drying his clothes over a small fire, he noticed what seemed to be the tell-tale signs of gold! So this must have been old Flin Flon's lake! And that is how the town got its name.

### QUESTIONS:

1. What year was Tom Creighton prospecting near Lake Flin Flon?
2. How many years ago was that? Can you find out how old your grandfather was at that time?
3. Do you think the prospectors really believed that this was old Flin Flon's lake?
4. Could there really be such a place in the middle of the earth?
5. What happens to the temperature as you go deeper into the earth? Where could you find out about this?
6. What are our coins made of? Is a \$20.00 piece made of the same material?

### THINGS TO DO:

1. See what you can find out about the writers Jules Verne and Samuel Butler. Perhaps Mr. Preston-Muddock was a little-known writer because he copied ideas from them. If you read some of their books, you will find out which ideas he copied.
2. See if you can find any other true stories of famous mineral finds.

## UNIT II: MINING

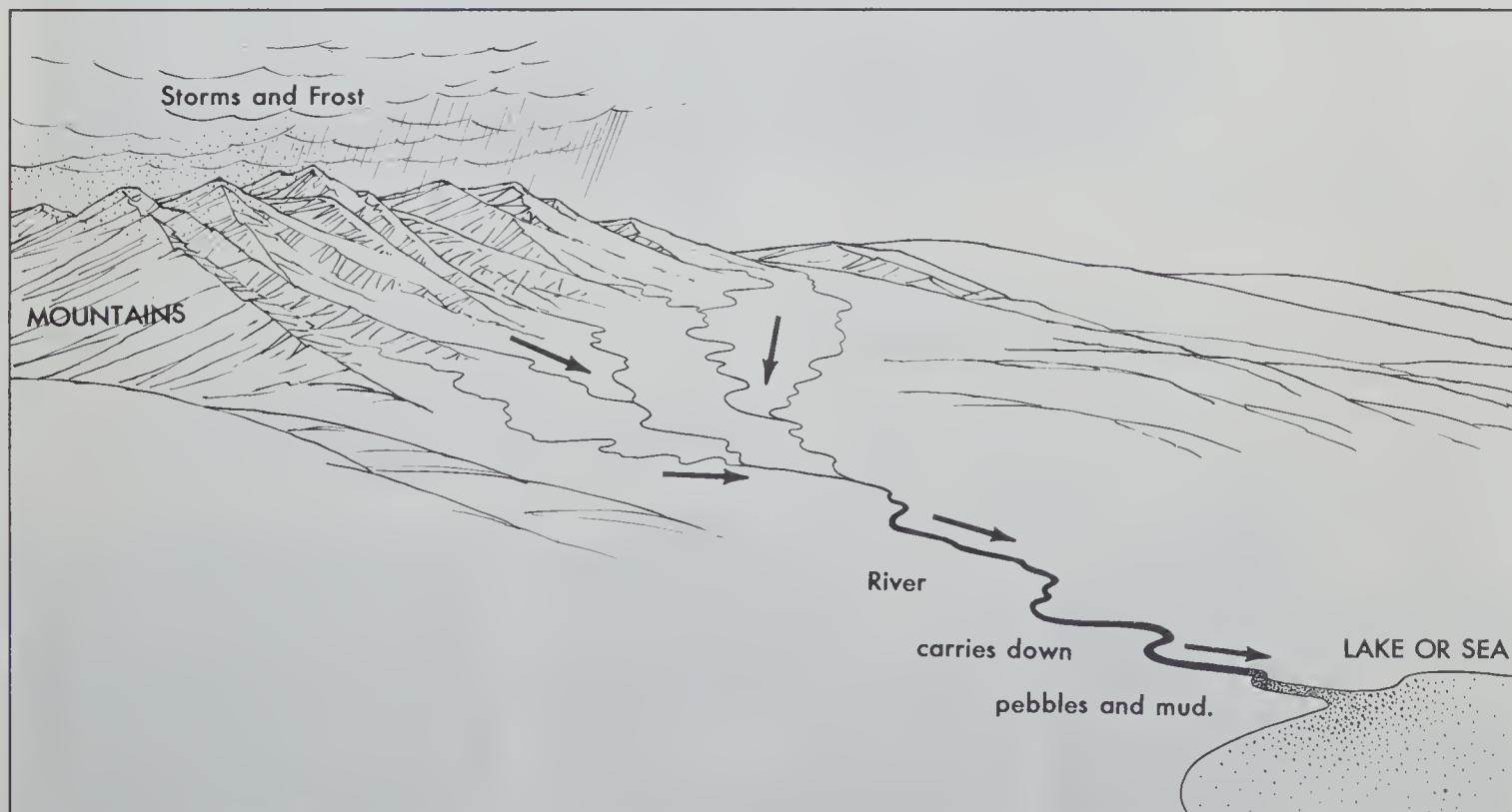
### *How the Earth's riches were made*

Somebody in your class will probably have some samples of rocks at home, or will know someone who has. The very best way to learn about something is to see it, and pictures of different kinds of rock wouldn't be nearly as interesting as the real thing. See if your class can get together a collection of rocks. If you can't, perhaps you can visit a museum or school where you can see such a collection.

Perhaps you could then answer the following questions.

1. Could you see some mineral ores in the rocks?
2. How did they look: flakes? small blobs? streaks?
3. How could you have separated the ore from the rest of the rock?
4. Did all the rocks have ore in them?
5. Did any of the very soft rocks have any ore in them?

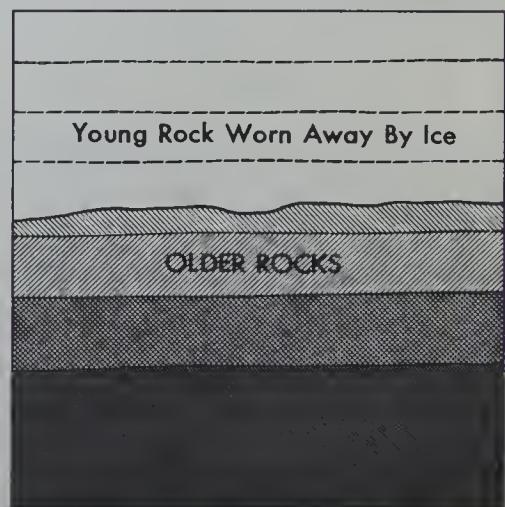
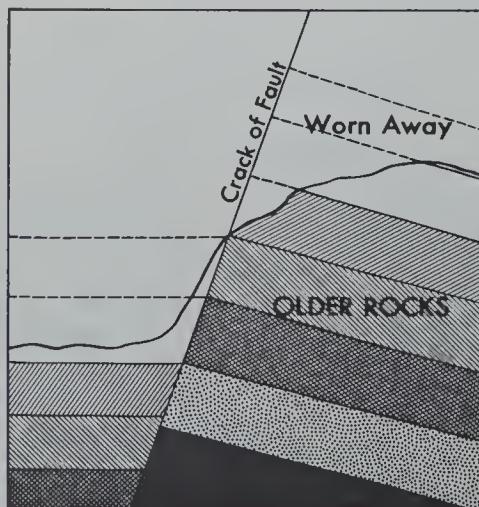
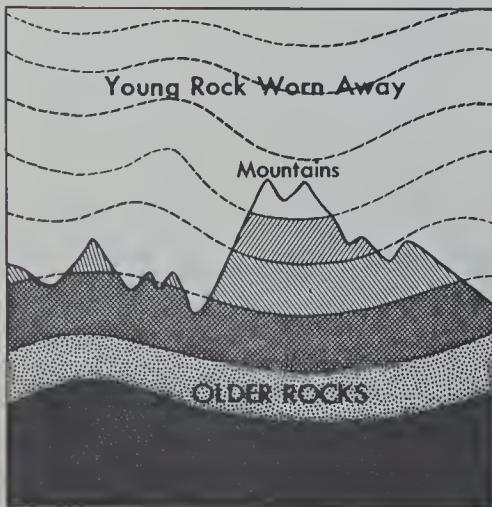
FIGURE 13.



In the diagram (figure 13), you can see how mountains are worn down by the rain and the wind, and how the little pieces are washed down by streams. When you get home, take some sand, or some mud, and mix it with water in a glass. Shake it well, so that the water is moving all over the place in the glass. Then set it down and see what happens in a few minutes. This is what happens when a river gets to a big lake or the sea. A geologist, someone who studies rocks, would tell you that mud and sand are actually rocks; very new, but still rocks. So layer after layer of new rock will be laid down on the bottom of lakes and seas. Each new layer adds more weight. This extra weight squeezes them, until, over millions of years they turn into very hard rocks. And it can take millions of years for a mineral deposit to be formed.

We would be wasting our time to look for valuable minerals in the newer, softer rocks near the surface of the earth. It is no good digging for lead ore, or copper ore in the clays of Winnipeg.

FIGURE 14.



### THINGS TO DO:

The next diagram (figure 14) shows how sometimes Nature helps the miner by bringing the older rocks up to the surface, or near the surface. Then he can get at the valuable minerals. In our diagram find the three ways which are shown. Where would you go looking for minerals if you were a prospector?

In parts of Manitoba we have many square miles of what is called the Canadian Shield. This is an area of very old rocks, a kind of huge slab that has been cleared of younger rocks by the winds, the rain, and especially by immense sheets of ice that covered our country thousands of years ago. Look again at our first picture of Flin Flon. Is it part of the Shield? Why can't we see bare rock all over the place? Find picture 31. How is it like the Flin Flon picture?

Look at our map (figure 15) which shows the rough outline of the Canadian Shield.



FIGURE 15.

### QUESTIONS:

1. Which other provinces of Canada might have mines like those in Flin Flon?
2. Look at this map, and one of Manitoba. You will be able to guess several other Manitoba towns that have mines nearby. You may be wrong, but at least it will have been a good guess. And a prospector is really just a good guesser.

### *Opening up a mine*

About one hundred years ago, thousands of factories were being built in Europe and North America, and most of them were hungry for metal. To see why, just look around you and list all the things that have metal in them.

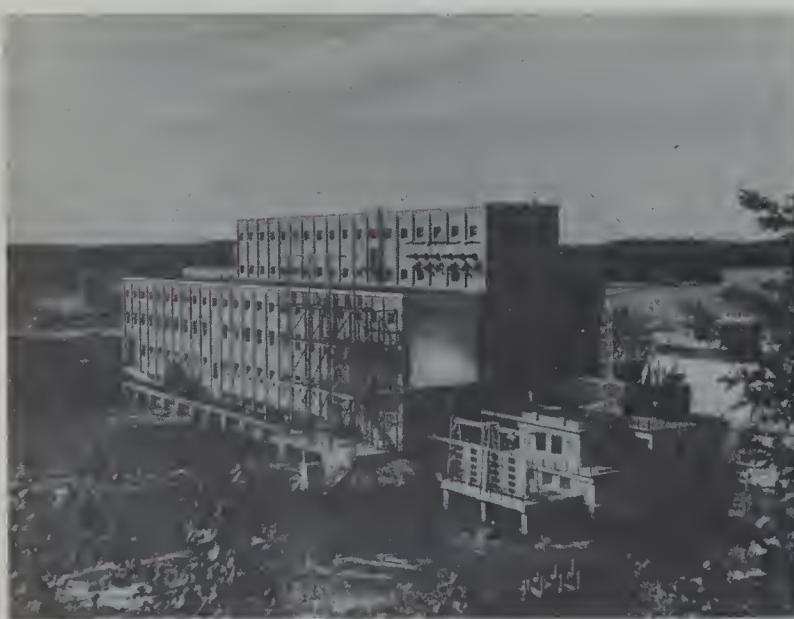
The owners of small mines in Europe had saved some of their money, and with it they went looking all over the world for

rich new mines to feed the hungry factories. These were the first international mining companies, and they started mines (or bought them) in Africa, Australia, South America, North America and Asia.

Often the search was made easier by prospectors, such as Jack Murray, and sometimes because the local people had been mining for hundreds of years. We know, for example, that Indians had been working copper not far from Manitoba (near Lake Superior) a long time ago:

The earliest French missionaries found among the Indians, a very few, but very rude and illy formed copper knives... The Indians knew of boulders or detached masses of copper and when they found small pieces of it in the gravel, or on the pebble beach, they made the best skill of which they were possessed to fashion it into some useful implement.\*

FIGURE 16.



Why do you think the prospector couldn't start a mine by himself? To find out why they had to sell their claims to a mining company, we can just do a little simple arithmetic. By the time the Flin Flon mine was ready to start, about \$30,000,000 had been spent. Imagine you were a mine worker saving about \$500 a year, a large sum one hundred years ago. How many years would it have taken you to save \$30,000,000? Tom Creighton and his friends certainly didn't have that kind of money.

Look at figure 16. What does this picture show? This one is at Island Falls, not far from Flin Flon. Find Island Falls on the map. It provides power to the mines and the smelter, as well as to the town of Flin Flon. It had to be built before any minerals could be taken from the Flin Flon "strike."

What would have to be brought in from the south to build this? There were no roads then, in northern Manitoba, so what would also need to be done before the mine could begin?

These were just two of the things that added up to \$30,000,000.

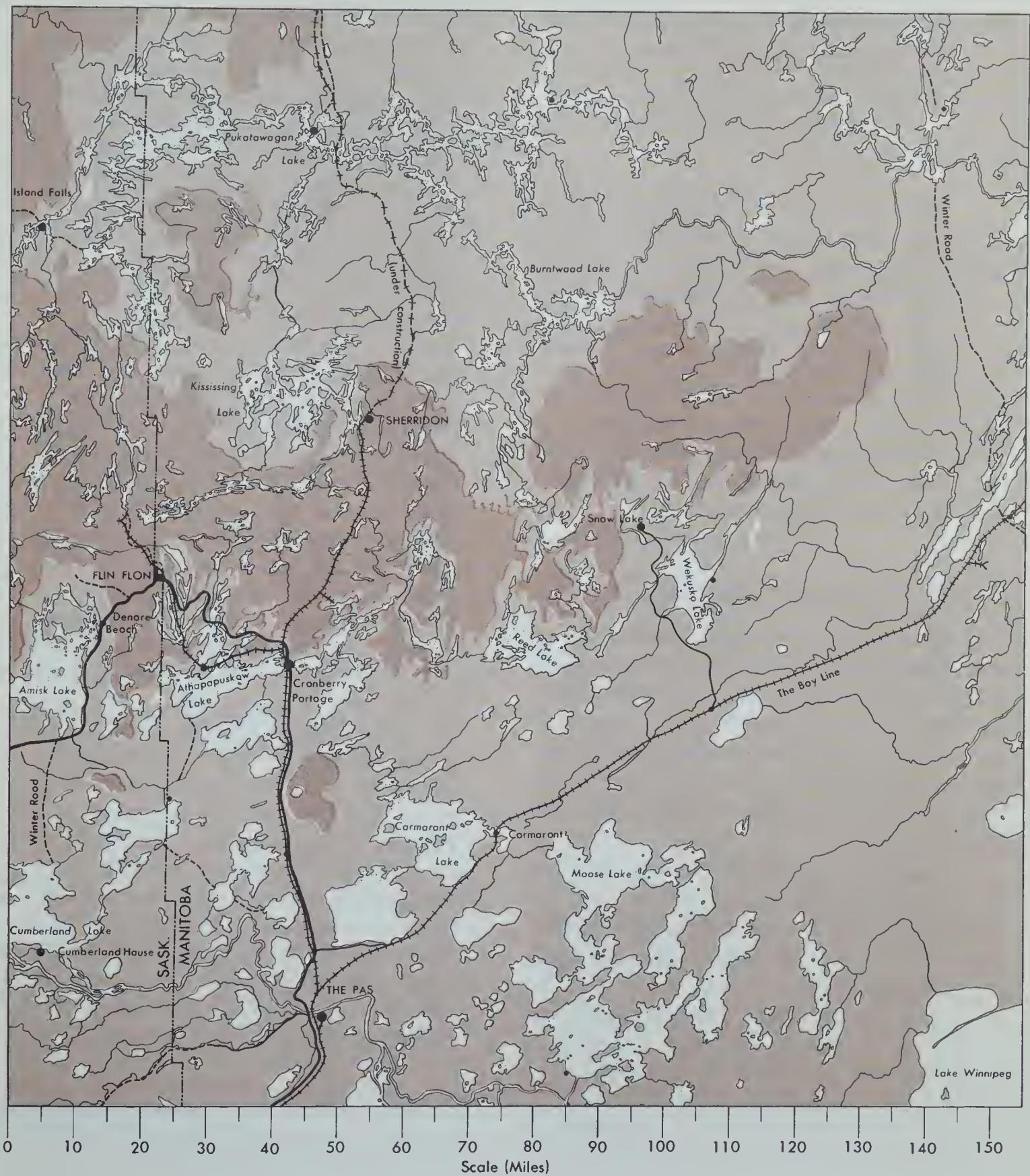
#### QUESTIONS:

1. Why would a mine need power?

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\*Charles Whittlesey, *The Ancient Miners of Lake Superior*, 1854, incorporated in Drier and Du Temple, *Prehistoric Copper Mining in the Lake Superior Region* privately published limited edition by Drier and Du Temple, 1961.

## THE FLIN FLON REGION



2. Why couldn't the prospectors just open a small mine with what money they had?

### THINGS TO DO:

1. Imagine that you have just found a rich mine at the North Pole. Make a list of all the things you would need money for. Remember that your miners can't just starve, and that nobody wants to buy minerals at the North Pole.
2. Perhaps your teacher will show you the film strip "Mining Town" (National Film Board) to find out where all the money was spent.

### *A story about mine-finding*

Before you read this story, take an atlas and find England. Then find Nicaragua, a small country in Central America. How far would it be by boat between the two? Our story shows how an English mining company obtained a rich mine that had been worked for many years by the Indians:

A Spanish miner was sitting in the small store he ran as a side-line, for he had had no luck prospecting or mining for some time. One day an Indian paid him an unexpected visit:

"If it is rich stones you are after," said the Indian, "I can take you to a place where you shall find enough to last you a lifetime." The offer was gladly accepted and the Indian should receive three cows for showing

it. Chopping-knife in hand, and a few provisions on their back, the two entered the thick virgin forest which stretches from Libertad to the shores of the Atlantic Ocean. After travelling several leagues, they arrived at a place where the Indians were in the habit of shooting javalis, a kind of wild boar. "Will this satisfy you?" asked the guide triumphantly. The miner was dumbfounded. After years of fruitless toil and search, he saw at last before him a property combining all the features of a good mine. On the slopes of a hill rising five hundred feet above a river-bed, and ensuring a natural drainage, he found a wide lode of quartz rock, rich in silver and gold, and traceable for several miles; magnificent waterfalls available for setting in motion the most powerful machinery; and in every direction timber of excellent quality for mining purposes. This was the now famous Javali mine, the ore of which up to that time was taken out in small quantities only, and ground to powder in mortars cut out of the solid rock of the river bed, whenever the Indians required gold for trading purposes. Hastening to register his claims officially, the enraptured miner tried to raise the funds necessary for turning this valuable discovery to account; but his credit was so low that not one of his countrymen would lend him a few dollars to buy picks and shovels.\*

\*Captain Pim and Dr. Seeman, *Dotting in Panama, Nicaragua and Mosquito*, London, 1869, pp. 108, 109, 132, and 133.

Then along came the agent of an English mining company, a certain Captain Holman, who had made his way over roads that "were nothing but a broad streak of mud," rivers and swamps: "that Horrid river, San Juan, with its rank vegetation and fever-breathing swamps; and above all, those frightful creatures, the alligators!" He finally bought the Javali mine for \$150,000, a fortune in those days.

#### QUESTIONS:

1. Why should the Indian have been happy to accept three cows as payment for leading a miner to a gold mine?
2. Why do you think the Indians in that story hadn't registered a claim to the mine?
3. Why is it useful to have natural drainage for a mine?
4. How would waterfalls help the miners in using machinery?

5. Why did the Indians pound the ore to dust in their mortars?
6. Why did the Spaniard sell out to an English mining company?

#### THINGS TO DO:

1. Write an imaginary story in which some Canadian Indians lead (or refuse to lead) a Canadian prospector to a rich "find."
2. Try to act a small play showing the directors of a mining company, in England, Montreal or New York, trying to decide whether or not to buy a mine in some far off place, for example, Australia, the Congo, or Northern Manitoba!
3. You could make a very large map of the world in the corridor and stick on coloured circles where copper, zinc and iron are mined. An economic atlas will help. If you can find pictures of these places, paste them on the map.

## Ready to go

Here is a list of different kinds of transport:

Canoe	Horseback	Train
Air	Back-packing	Bus
Truck	Ships	Pipeline
Cable-car	Camels	Rocketship

You can add a few more. How many of these have you tried? Which of them *could* be used for carrying ores and metals? Why would some of them *not* be used? Which of these were possible from Flin Flon in 1927?

The Hudson's Bay Mining and Smelting Company (we shall call it the HBM&SC, as everyone else does) decided to use trains, but there weren't any. This meant extending the railway line north from The Pas to Flin Flon. How do you think the HBM&SC persuaded the railway company to build this line?

FIGURE 17.



To save on the number of rail cars they would have to use, for each trip would cost them money, the HBM&SC decided to separate the metals from the rock right there in Flin Flon. The ore was very complicated, as this HBM&SC report shows. Count the number of different metals.

The copper occurs as a combination of *copper*, *iron* and *sulphur*, a sulphide known to the miner as chalcopyrite. The *zinc* also occurs as a sulphide with the name sphalerite. Another mineral in the ore is the sulphide pyrite, a combination of iron and sulphur. The other metals in the ore such as *gold*, *silver*, *cadmium*, *selenium* and *tellurium* are in smaller quantities as compounds . . .

Figure 17 shows the copper smelter in Flin Flon. By 1930 it was ready to begin work. Check back to find out when Tom Creighton and his friends had first made their strike, and work out how many years had passed before the mine was ready to go.

Figure 18 shows what happens to the ore after it comes out of the mines in and around Flin Flon and other parts of northern Manitoba.

The slab zinc and blister copper is taken to big factories in Ontario and the United States where it is used in many ways. What are copper and zinc used for?

The things that go on in the mill, in the zinc concentrate plant, and in the copper smelter are very complicated. In the mill, the ore is first crushed by a huge crushing

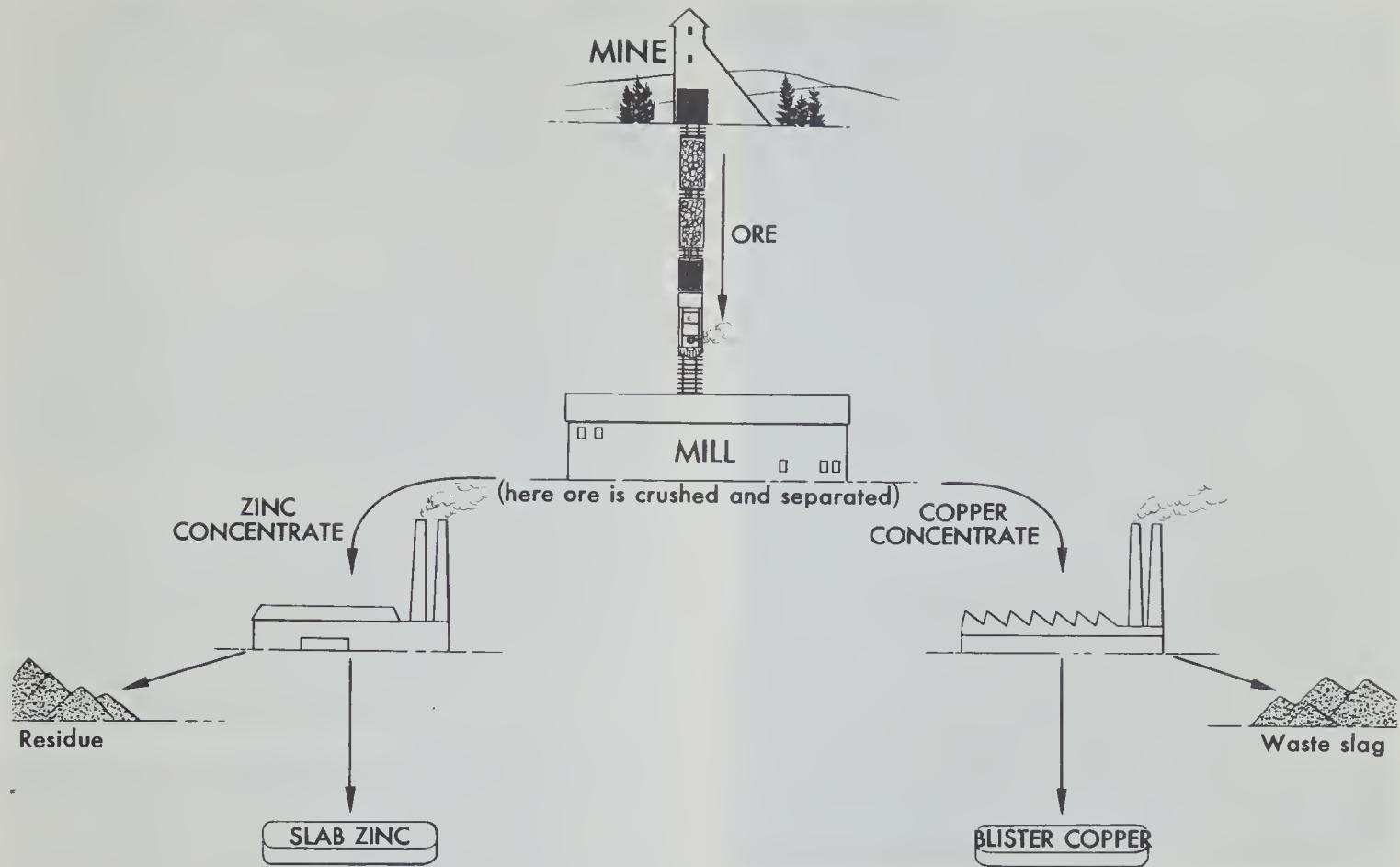


FIGURE 18.

machine that would flatten a car in no time at all. Then the fine grains of ore are put into water and special chemicals are added. The lead, the zinc and the copper come floating to the top, one at a time, and are scooped off.

The zinc then goes off to be roasted, leached, thickened and purified. Meanwhile, the copper ore is being heated to 2000 degrees. (How hot is water when it boils?) The copper comes bubbling out as a liquid.

In the old days, the waste material

used to be left in huge ugly dumps. People didn't like that, so today the companies must get rid of all that waste. Where would you put it? The HBM&SC used most of it to fill in parts of the mine they are no longer using.

By 1930, the railway to The Pas was in operation, and Flin Flon began its career as the biggest mining centre in Canada's northland. Large numbers of people began to arrive to work in the plants (the smelter and the zinc plant), in the mine or in transport.



FIGURE 19.

The man shown in figure 19 began to work on the Flin Flon to The Pas run when it began. This is a picture of him when he retired just a year or two ago.

*THINGS TO DO:*

1. Find the railway line to Flin Flon in your atlas. You might like to draw a railway map of Manitoba. Where do most of the lines go? Why?
2. See if you can make a list of minerals, adding what they are often used for. The class could make a big display in the corridor with pictures showing the uses of different minerals.
3. Perhaps the HBM&SC will send you one of their booklets about the smelter if you write to them. It will explain what goes on inside, and how metals are taken out of the ore.

## UNIT III: THE GROWTH OF FLIN FLON

In the years between 1930 and 1939 something went terribly wrong, all over Canada, the United States, and much of the world.

Factories closed because they couldn't sell what they made. Businesses closed down. Farmers couldn't sell their food, even though people were hungry all over the world. This was the Great Depression. Our picture (figure 20) shows the Salvation Army Thrift Shop, in Flin Flon, which sold other people's cast-off clothing to those who hadn't enough money to buy new clothes. There were shops like this all over Canada, and places where you could wait in line for a bowl of soup, just to keep from starving.

Luckily for the HBM&SC, there were still enough factories working that needed copper and zinc. So they kept working, which meant that there were jobs to be had in Flin Flon. We asked an old-timer in Flin Flon why he had come. He replied:

Well, I came here from Saskatchewan in the '30's. It was one of the few places where you could find work. Yes, you had to wait in line six months for a job, but where else could you go?

Men who had wives and children to feed came to Flin Flon in large numbers in those years, and they brought their families with them. Most of them were



FIGURE 20.

from the Prairie Provinces, but quite a number were new Canadians coming from the Ukraine, Germany, Poland and Czechoslovakia. This is what made Flin Flon different from a lot of mining towns; people actually came to stay, to build homes and to bring up their children. Today many new buildings are going up and Flin Flon looks very rich and contented.

### QUESTIONS:

1. How did the Great Depression *help* Flin Flon to grow?



FIGURE 21. Snow removal in Flin Flon

2. Why do miners only stay a year or two in many mining towns, such as Thompson (Manitoba) and Cassiar (British Columbia)? Think of as many reasons as you can. Perhaps you can find these towns in your atlas.
3. Can you find the Ukraine, Germany, Poland and Czechoslovakia on a map? Which continent are they in?

#### THINGS TO DO:

Here are a lot of figures. They tell you how many people were born in Flin Flon, got married in Flin Flon, or died in Flin Flon in the years from 1934 to 1954.

Year	Marriages	Births	Deaths
1934	71	139	24
1935	68	173	26
1936	83	219	38
1937	104	257	36
1938	97	271	41
1939	119	242	50
1940	198	293	33
1941	107	312	30
1942	100	293	43
1943	84	292	30
1944	59	285	23
1945	57	259	31
1946	94	338	32
1947	83	372	43
1948	89	325	43
1949	95	351	43
1950	78	381	40
1951	70	416	41
1952	89	436	45
1953	91	464	56
1954	75	491	53

Make a *graph* using these figures, and then see if you can answer the following questions:

1. Why were there more marriages than usual in 1939, 1940 and 1941? When were the most children born?
2. Why do you think this was so? It might help you to know that the Second World War lasted from 1939 to 1945.
3. Was the population growing or shrinking? How many people live in Flin Flon today? Check this in the Canada Year Book. How many live in the other Manitoba mining towns?

## UNIT IV: ABOUT THE INDIANS

Here are two fishing pictures taken in Manitoba's northland (figures 22 and 23). Who is fishing for fun? Why is the Indian lady fishing? Who lived in Manitoba's northland before the mines began to open up?

If you were to put a factory right in the middle of, say, Afghanistan, who would you expect to work in it? Afghans, of course. What a silly question. But you can walk around Flin Flon all day and meet only a handful of Indians and Métis (descendants of early trappers and traders who married Indians). Very few have jobs in the HBM&SC mines and smelter.

FIGURE 22.



Some people say that this is because Indians are lazy. But others will tell you that they work very hard and are reliable. How is it that we can get such different answers to a simple question? It is very dangerous to look at one or two people, perhaps two Afghans or two Swedes, and then say important-sounding things about *all* Afghans or *all* Swedes. Maybe they just took a dislike to you, or even punched you on the left ear! Would it be true to say that Afghans and Swedes have a habit of punching people's left ears? But this is just the kind of thing that we are saying, in a way, about the Indians of our province.

FIGURE 23.





FIGURE 24.

Figure 24 shows the household of a poor Indian family in northern Manitoba.

1. Do you think their father has a job?
2. Do they look very happy? Or hopeful?

FIGURE 25.



Now look at figure 25. It is a photograph of two young Indian girls, visiting Flin Flon for the first time from their village a little farther north.

1. Do they look less clever than anyone in your class?
2. Do they look lazy?

We asked why there were so few Indians working in Flin Flon. Some people said that the HBM&SC wouldn't give them jobs until a few years ago. The company told us that the Indians just didn't apply.

A man who owns a small lumber mill told us he employs Indians, but that he has to pay them less than other Canadians because they don't really know the job. Then a man in the Labour Temple in Flin Flon said; "That's just a dirty trick to make more money out of them." It is very difficult to get to the bottom of stories like these.

It is a cruel, hard life in some of the small communities near Flin Flon. The Indians and Métis have to work very hard to make a living at fishing, hunting, trapping and other odd jobs. This short story could happen any time:

A special helicopter mercy flight, with doctors aboard, found a young Métis mother dead in a lonely cabin ten miles from Sherridon. Her newly born baby was lying wrapped in rabbit and fox furs. The baby was rushed by helicopter to the hospital in Flin Flon.

Mrs. David Charlette, aged 23, had become very ill with pneumonia late one Thursday night. Her brother-in-law, Joseph Charlette, decided to fight his way through a raging blizzard to Sherridon, where there was a telephone. For ten miles he smashed his way through the ice in his small canoe, racing for help.

Dr. Ross, who arrived too late to save Mrs. Charlette, said; "It was pitiful. We arrived too late to help. The father and children all broke down when we arrived and took the baby away. But they just accepted their plight as part of their isolated life."

Perhaps the most exciting thing that is happening for young people is the Frontier Collegiate, in Cranberry Portage just south of Flin Flon. Find Cranberry Portage on the map in Chapter II. Here the children are flown in from their villages when term begins, and have their own rooms to live in. They study the same things that you will in high school, and this way they will have the same chance to find interesting jobs later on. Maybe you will study with some of them at the University of Manitoba.

But Frontier Collegiate is very new. Maybe it should have been built years and years ago. What do you think?

Figure 26 shows the Indian-Métis Friendship Centre in Flin Flon. It is right next to the hospital, so what do you think it is mainly used for? How might the hospital have saved Mrs. Charlette?



FIGURE 26.

#### QUESTIONS:

1. What difficulties might a Cree house-wife have when her family decided to move into Flin Flon? To start the ideas coming, ask yourself if you can buy a piece of moose-meat in a supermarket, or if you would have savings banks and gas bills in a small village in the north.
2. Why might a Cree Canadian *not* want to live in Flin Flon?

#### THINGS TO DO:

1. See if you can find out what is being done *for* the Indians, and *by* the Indians of Canada. You might make a collection of clippings from the newspaper.
2. Hold a class discussion about some of the things in this unit.

## About Harry Moody

Look at figure 27. It is a picture of Harry Moody and Dr. MacNiesh, a famous archaeologist. (If you do not know what an archaeologist is, look up the word in a dictionary and get a book on archaeology from the library.)

We put in the old picture of a trading post (figure 28) because Mr. Moody opened his about forty years ago, at Beaver Lake, which was a large Indian village some twenty miles away from present-day Flin Flon.

Archaeology, and getting to know his Indian neighbours, was Mr. Moody's hobby while he kept his store. We decided to talk to Mr. Moody, and found him recovering from a bad cold in the hospital at Flin Flon.

FIGURE 27.



"Was Moody Lake named after you?" we asked.

"No," he said, with a laugh, "Moody Lake was named after the son of the first Mountie in the Hudson Bay area. This son of his married an Indian lady, and lived up in that country for many years. But they named the main street in Denare Beach after me."

"Why was that?" we asked, hoping not to sound too impolite.

"Well, I was the first trader in that area," he replied. "I had been out prospecting in Saskatchewan that year. I decided to open a store, and started it in a tent. The Indians lived on an island, just across from my store."

We wanted to know what kinds of things he traded, so, with a little encouragement, he continued.

"Well, there were all kinds of things they needed," he said. "Matches, lamps, cooking pots, tools, fish-hooks. Little things, but all kinds of things. Some traders took furs in exchange. But I used to send their furs down to the fur auctions in Winnipeg. I took 5% commission. I think they did better that way."

"Furs? Aha!" So we asked him about the Hudson's Bay Company.

"No, we are mostly independent traders in these parts," he replied. "The Hudson's Bay Company were down in Cumberland House. That was their headquarters. They traded in furs a lot."

"Perhaps you would like to look at these?" He opened an old box that he kept close to his bed, and brought out what seemed to be pieces of soft brown cloth. He adjusted his reading lamp and



FIGURE 28.

said, "Now, just hold them up to the light. Beautiful patterns, wigwams, trees, owls, flowers and bees have been picked out in the soft birch-bark as if with a pin."

"Goodness," we said, "this is much finer than embroidery."

One of the patterns in Mr. Moody's collection is seen in figure 29. How was it made? If you don't know, read on.

Mr. Moody's eyes twinkled. "I've seen a woman bite one of those in about seven minutes," he said.

"Bite!" we all said at once.

He told us about the old art of birch-bark biting, and many more of the wonderful crafts and skill of the Indians of Manitoba and Saskatchewan, and we began to understand why he had been sought out by the famous Canadian archaeologist, Dr. "Scotty" MacNiesh. Dr. MacNiesh had come to set up the small museum at Denare Beach a few years ago. Together they had searched the forests, along with Harry Moody's



FIGURE 29.

FIGURE 30.



Indian friends, to try to piece together the unwritten history of Northern Manitoba.

Now and again Mr. Moody puffed contentedly at his pipe. "If that doctor catches me smoking he'll . . ."

"Don't worry," we laughed, as we got up to leave, "we won't tell him a thing!"

Look at figure 30. What are the Indians doing in this picture? Next time you are out in the woods, try a small piece yourself, to see how easy it is.

#### QUESTIONS:

1. What other things might the Indians make during the long winter evenings?
2. Why do people all over the world make fewer and fewer things for themselves? What can *you* make?
3. Why was the museum built at Denare Beach instead of in Flin Flon?

#### THINGS TO DO:

1. Mr. Moody told us some of the things the Indians put in their birch-bark patterns. Make a list of other things they might use for ideas. Draw pictures of some of these.
2. Maybe your class can make a historical museum. If you do, remember that the most important part of it will be the explanations you write. Make sure that each item you collect has its story.

# UNIT V: FLIN FLON: A COMMUNITY IN THE NORTH

## *How Flin Flon fits into the north*

First of all, let's look at figure 31. This picture was taken from the air near Island Falls.

1. Can you find the dam that you saw in Unit II?
2. What can you say about the northern Manitoba countryside?
3. Can you see any farmland?

The map of northern Manitoba in Unit II showed some of the settlements in northern Manitoba. Find the following:

1. Flin Flon
2. Denare Beach
3. Island Falls
4. Sherridon
5. Snow Lake
6. The Pas
7. Cranberry Portage (you've already found it once)

### QUESTIONS:

1. What does "portage" mean? What language is it? Why is there one at Cranberry?
2. Why do the roads and railways wind about so much?

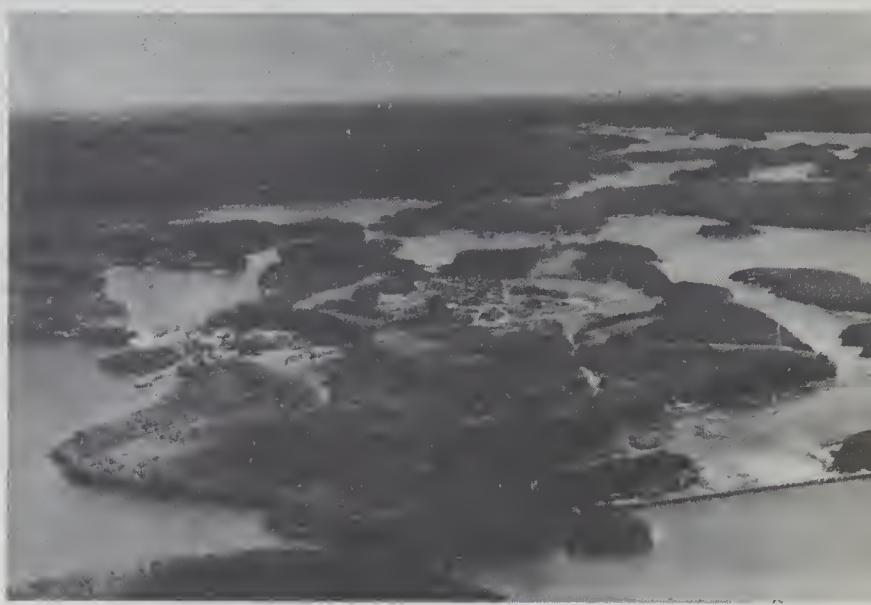


FIGURE 31.

Now study the map, figure 32.

1. What can you tell about farming from this map?
2. What have small children in Flin Flon, Sherridon and Island Falls never seen? Study the picture as well as the map.
3. What do you think the mining towns of the north must do to get their food?

Most mining towns don't have much to do with the countryside round about. The people may sometimes go fishing, skiing, swimming and hunting, and the mine may buy some lumber. Almost everything is brought into Flin Flon from farther south.

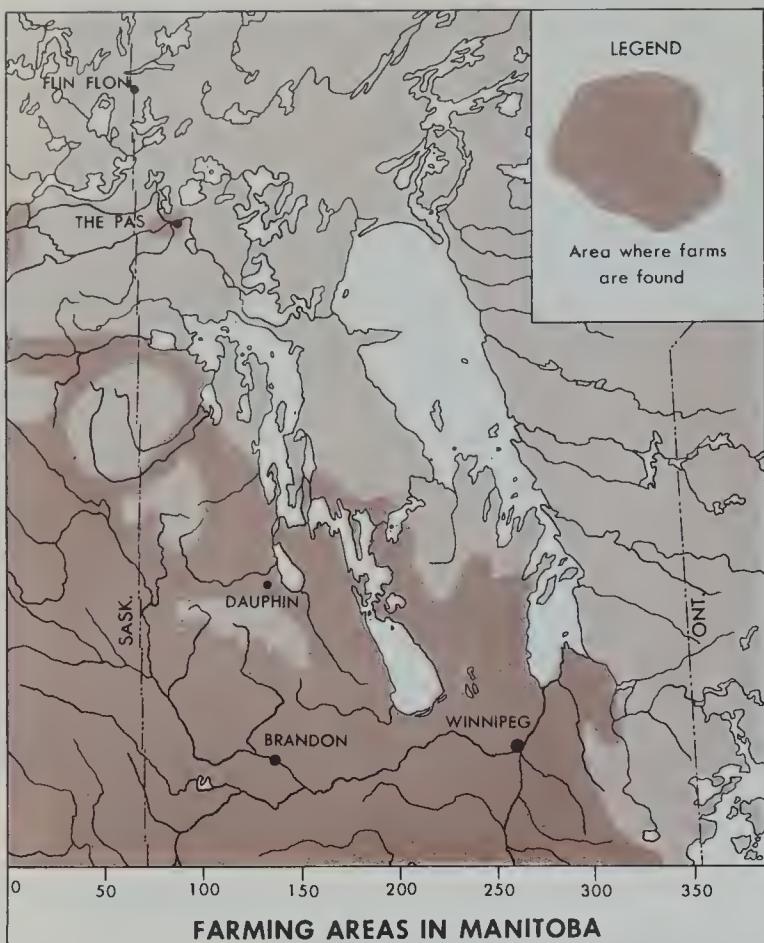


FIGURE 32.

In Unit II, we read how miners brought their families to live in Flin Flon. What kinds of things would a mining town have to build if a lot of young people, small children, women and old people came to live there? You can make a list:

1. Hospitals
2. ....
3. ....

See how many you can think of. This is what made it a real town instead of just a camp.

Also, quite a lot of people have to work in the north and need a place for their

head office; the RCMP, bush-pilots, the Welfare Department, the Northern Health Unit, companies that provide things like gas and equipment to small mines, small mining companies, the companies that provide food to small stores in the north, and so on. All of these decided that Flin Flon was just the right place, for it is the biggest town between The Pas and Churchill. So in this way Flin Flon became a *centre* instead of just a lonely mining and smelting town.

#### QUESTIONS:

1. Why don't the Flin Flonners get their food from the countryside around them? After all, the Indians did for hundreds of years, even thousands of years, as Dr. MacNiesh found out.
2. If you lived (or live) in a small community not too far from a large town, what kind of things would you (or do you) use the town for?
3. Why would a mine need lumber?

#### THINGS TO DO:

1. Draw an imaginary picture map showing the things that came into a town like Flin Flon, and the things and people that go out into the surrounding countryside.
2. Find out what a Welfare Department does. You could ask a social worker to come to class to answer your questions.

3. Lastly, take a look at figure 33. Here we see the RCAF about to fly a very sick person from Flin Flon. Where do you think they are taking him? Why? Make a list of some of the other things you might see going on at Flin Flon's air strip.

## *Could Flin Flon die?*

The summer in northern Manitoba is wonderful. Sitting in your fishing boat in the sun, casting a lazy line into a clear blue lake or taking a quick swim, you might think "Why should anyone ever want to leave?" Even in winter, when temperatures can plunge to  $-50^{\circ}$  F., there is curling, hockey, skating, skiing and ice-fishing.

The main reason people would want to leave would be a lack of work. This could happen if the mines and the smelter were to close. A visit to Sherridon, just a few miles from Flin Flon, can show you what could happen.

Bang! In 1934 the mine at Sherridon closed down. The little town of about two thousand people, with its brand new 54-room hotel, was plunged into despair. It was still at the height of the Great Depression, and other jobs were hard to find. The people led a miserable existence until 1940, when the wartime need for metals reopened the mine in 1940. All went well until 1952, when the mine closed again, this time for good.

Overnight, the little town almost disappeared, because the Company hauled



FIGURE 33.

away most of the houses over winter roads to a new mining area far to the north, at Lynn Lake. Only a few hundred people, mainly Indians, stayed on. A local mink rancher bought the hotel and still operates it for tourists, but there is little left of the town. Even the wooden planking from a few remaining houses has been used for firewood. Walter Shmon, the mink rancher, says: "Someone has to lift the jinx off this place and it will boom" What did Mr. Shmon mean by "jinx"?

When a town dies like this, we call it a ghost town. At the back of their minds, Flin Flonners are always worried about this. Will Flin Flon become a ghost town? Or will the Bombers continue to strike terror into the hearts of other hockey teams for years to come?

Here is a list of the numbers of people in different jobs in Flin Flon.

<i>Employment</i>	<i>Numbers</i>
HBM&SC	1,917
Government Jobs	172
Business (mainly stores)	608
Professional (teachers, doctors, lawyers, etc.)	266
Other	285

1. How many people are working?
2. How many of these are working for the Company?
3. Are there more people working for the Company than there are in other jobs?
4. How many people would provide services for the people working for the Company?

The Company says it isn't going to close down, and most Flin Flonners agree. But how many jobs would be left if the Company *did* close down? And would most of these remaining jobs last very long? How many store-keepers, teachers, doctors, bus drivers and others would stay if most families left?

#### *QUESTIONS:*

1. Why do we call Sherridon a ghost town?

2. Why was there a need for more metals in wartime?
3. What is a winter road?
4. What is a mink rancher?

#### *THINGS TO DO:*

1. Find out all you can about ghost towns. There may be one not far from where you live, or you might have seen one on your vacation. See if you can find out the reasons for them becoming ghost towns.

#### *Detective work*

Look at figure 34. It is a map of Flin Flon. Which part do you think is the oldest part? Why?

Find the far south of Flin Flon. Can you see Douglas Street? Which province is it in? How can you tell? What can you find on both the map and our first aerial photograph of Flin Flon? It will help if you work out which way the photographer was looking when he took the photograph. What does the photograph show that the map does not? What does the map tell you that the photograph does not?

Look at the houses in figure 35. Do they look very new? Can you spot the wooden sewer pipes? The sewers in this older part of town were built in wooden boxes because it would have been very expensive to blast the solid rock to make

FIGURE 34.



proper sewers. Were they building for a town that would last? Why?

A visit to the areas marked on the map such as Lakeview, Lakeside, Willowvale and Birchview would show you houses like those in figure 36. How much would homes like these cost where you live? Perhaps they could help you at home with this question.

Besides the homes and the sewers, we can look for clues in the main buildings. If they are new and expensive, then the town is built to last. If they are old and shoddy, then it isn't. We found some old

ones and some new ones. Check these on the map.

HBM&SC Offices	....	old
General Hospital	....	old with a new \$1,700,000 exten- sion planned
Post Office	.....	very new
Town Hall	.....	old
Community Centre	....	very new
Ice Rink	.....	quite new
Hapnot Collegiate	....	very new

FIGURE 35.



A detective doesn't just look for clues he can see. He also finds out all he can about the people in the case. In the "case" of Flin Flon, there is one really important "person," the HBM&SC.

In 1963 HBM&SC was taken over by a much bigger Company that has mines all over Africa and in other parts of the world. Perhaps this big Company (still called the HBM&SC in Flin Flon) would decide to concentrate on its mines in Africa and not bother with the mines near Flin Flon?

Some people who work in the smelter say that not much new machinery has been put in lately. What *might* this mean?

#### THINGS TO DO:

1. Maybe you could hold a class discussion on whether Flin Flon is likely to die. Do *you* think it will? Most Flin Flonners don't.
2. Find out, with the help of your teacher, how one company takes over another one. Do they shoot one another, for example? Then see if you can collect items from the newspaper about such take-overs.

#### *Lumbering, fishing and furs*

There are three big industries in Canada's northlands, besides mining. You can read about them in many books about Canada. We will just see how important they are in the area around Flin Flon, because they could help to keep the town alive.



FIGURE 36.

Look at figure 37. This isn't a pet dog. What is it? It was killed in the streets of Flin Flon one cold night. A trapper would get more than \$20 for the skin of a full grown one. What might its skin be used for? What other animals might be

FIGURE 37.



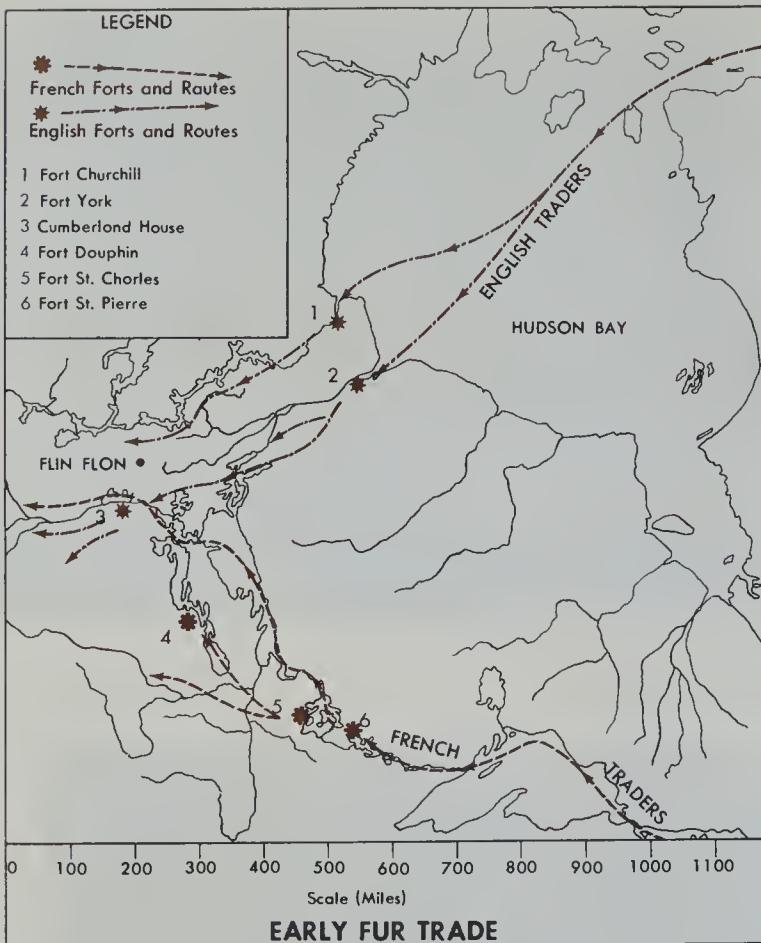


FIGURE 38.

trapped for their skins, furs, and pelts? See if you can make a long list.

Long before the mines began, Englishmen and Frenchmen were making their way into Manitoba. They wanted furs, and either bought them from the Indians or trapped for themselves.

The map of English and French fur trade into Manitoba (figure 38) shows the routes they used. How do you think they travelled?

Why has Fort York got an English name and The Pas (Le Pas) a French one? (Can you speak French?) Why do

you think so few people in Flin Flon can speak French?

The great fur markets of the world are in Montreal, London (England) and Leningrad (the Soviet Union). Why should London be a great fur market? To answer this one, you will need to find out something about the *Hudson's Bay Company*, which is *not* the same as the HBM&SC. This big fur-buying company is still very important. Why should Leningrad be a great fur market? Ask somebody who knows about the Soviet Union.

Ladies in cold countries will always want to wear furs. Sometimes they pay a lot of money for a fur coat. Perhaps you can find out how much some of them cost? If more and more people want to buy furs, what might happen to the animals? Here are some of the things that we are doing to save the animals:

1. Making laws about which animals can be hunted and trapped, and which time of the year you can go hunting or trapping.
2. Setting aside some areas where animals cannot be hunted or trapped at all. What do we call areas like this? Is there one near your home? If there isn't, suggest a good place for one, and list the animals that might live there.
3. Making fur coats out of materials that are really not fur at all.
4. Setting up fur-farms, or fur-ranches, where valuable animals are raised just like any other farm animal.

Which of these four things might provide a lot of jobs in the country around Flin Flon? If you don't know, check back to Chapter II. There is a clue in the story.

Most of the wood used in homes in Manitoba comes from British Columbia. This is because the wetter and warmer climate of British Columbia gives us bigger trees and more different kinds to choose from.

There are some small lumber mills near Flin Flon, but not enough to provide many jobs to Flin Flonners. A multi-million dollar lumber industry is being planned, however, along the railway line that leads to Churchill (The Bay Line). Perhaps this could happen around Flin Flon. Below is a list of some of the fish you can find in a lake like the one in our picture (figure 39).

Pickerel  
Whitefish  
Yellow Perch  
Northern Pike

See if you can add another four or five. Try asking a fisherman who has visited the north.

The Indians are very skilful fishermen. They can dig a hole through three feet of ice with a pick in about ten minutes. The fish they catch are used to feed their families, to feed dogs, and to feed mink. These fish are also bought by big companies who sell them in the United States. In 1950, 5,000,000 pounds of fish were sent out of northern Manitoba.

Not long ago the children in Grade 10



FIGURE 39.

at the Sir Maurice Roche School in Flin Flon could write this:

The Provincial Fish Filleting Plant, located at Beaver Lake, 16 miles from town, receives huge amounts of fish daily. These are filleted, packed, then exported.

But when we went to Flin Flon, the plant was closed. Thousands of tons of last

year's fish were lying frozen and unsold. The fishermen told us that prices for fish had fallen so low that it wasn't worth fishing.

#### QUESTIONS:

1. Why might the price of fish fall so much? Think of all the possible reasons you can, and then ask your teacher for some more.
2. Why isn't it worth fishing if the price is low?
3. What would happen to Indian fishermen in a bad year like 1967?
4. Now you have some of the facts, conduct a debate on the topic: "Flin Flon cannot survive without its mine."

FIGURE 40.



#### *Visiting Flin Flon*

What have figures 40 and 41 got in common? That isn't really a fair question. The answer is that they're all part of the annual Trout Festival held in Flin Flon and its nearby lakes. Figure 40 shows a canoe race and figure 41 shows an Indian flour packing.

This is just a part of the programme:

#### BEAVER LAKE DAY

11:30 a.m.—Indian Net-setting Contest  
12:00 noon—Roblin High School Band  
12:30 p.m.—Opening Ceremonies  
12:45 p.m.—Junior Bathing Beauty Contest  
1:15 p.m.—Red River Jig Contest  
1:45 p.m.—Pulp-cutting and Wood-sawing Contest  
2:00 p.m.—Ladies' Nail-driving Contest (imagine the sore thumbs!)  
2:15 p.m.—Visiting Entertainers  
2:30 p.m.—Fish-filleting Demonstration  
2:45 p.m.—Aircraft Display  
3:15 p.m.—Finish of the "Gold Rush" Canoe Race  
4:00 p.m.—Indian Ladies Tea and Bannock Baking Contest  
4:30 p.m.—Indian Flour-packing Contest (you can keep what you can carry)

Meanwhile, the lakes around Flin Flon are covered with fishermen. There are prizes for the biggest trout, the biggest northern pike, and so on. And just to make it really hard on the fish, there are



FIGURE 41.

also ladies and junior prizes. And to make certain that lots of people come, the ice cream is free!

#### QUESTIONS:

1. Why do you think the Flin Flonners organized the Trout Festival?
2. Which other Canadian Provinces have lots of lakes and forests? So, where do you think most of the visitors come from?

#### THINGS TO DO:

1. Plan a special Festival for the area in which you live. If you already

have one, suggest how to make it better. Maybe your ideas will actually be used.

It is one thing to attract visitors, and it is quite another to find somewhere for them to stay. Many of them come in campers and trailers, so a lot of camp sites have been built along the highways. For fishermen there are fishing lodges on even the most isolated lakes. For motorists there are two motels in Flin Flon.

Look at figure 42. What has happened to this hotel? It has happened to each of Flin Flon's hotels, but the people there say it wasn't a bad thing, for now Flin Flon has two fine new hotels that tourists enjoy staying in.

#### QUESTIONS:

1. Why can it be a good thing if parts of a town burn down? If you don't

FIGURE 42.



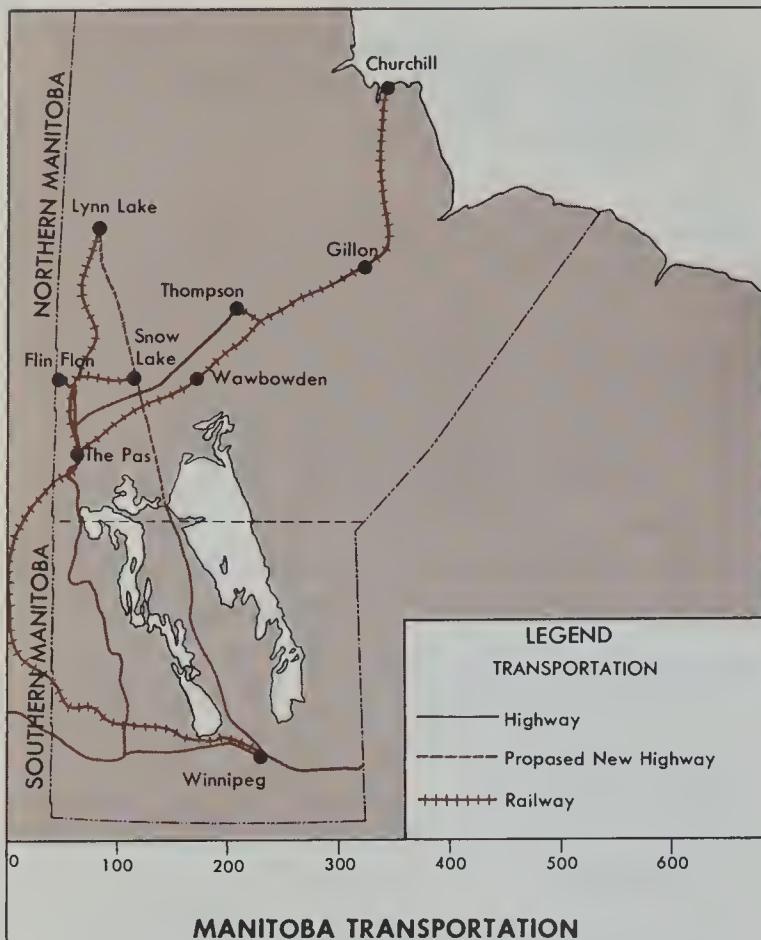


FIGURE 43.

FIGURE 44.



know, find out something about the Great Fire of London in 1666, and what happened afterwards.

2. Flin Flon has a full-time Fire Chief and a volunteer fire brigade. How is *your* community protected against fire? How is your school protected?
3. In your community, where can visitors stay?

## Travel in the north

What does this map (figure 43) tell you? Check the key to the map very carefully. Choose some towns and arrange them in pairs like this:

1. Flin Flon      The Pas
2. Wabowden      Lynn Lake

Then show all the different choices in kinds of transportation (if there are any) a person would have in travelling from the first town to the second. Of course they *could* decide to be different and go by camel.

There are several extra ways of travelling in the north besides those shown on the map.

Look at figure 44. This is Hank Parsons, one of the best bush pilots in the north. He owns his own airline, and people ask his help all the time, for instance, to take fishermen out to isolated lakes; to bring children to school; to take prospectors and mining engineers out to claims in the bush; to take sick people to hospital; and to ferry frozen fish.

You can add to the list quite easily. Our story will help.

## *A story about Walter*

"I realized I was over Tartan Lake at the time," Evans (a bush pilot) said, "so I looked out and started to say that was the lake right down there. I never finished because directly below me I saw the skeleton framework of the wing of an aircraft. I banked sharply to get a better look and then my heart missed a beat. Below me on a flat rock surrounded by bush was a small boy frantically waving his arms and jumping up and down.

"And all he said, when the rescue party reached him, was, 'Gee, I thought you would never come to get me.' And well he might complain, for he had been lost for 15 days! The plane he had been riding in with his father had crashed, and Walter had been thrown clear, although Mr. Sedor and the pilot hadn't been so lucky. Left all alone in the forest, Walter had saved his life by remembering what his father had told him; 'If anything happens, stay close to the plane until you are found. *Don't* try to get home by yourself.'"

Figure 45 shows a picture of Walter.

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. What do you think would be the biggest problems if you were lost in the bush?
2. Why is help more likely to come to you if you were in an airplane?
3. Why might it be difficult for people



**FIGURE 45.**

in isolated cabins to get help when needed?

4. Why is it best to stay near the plane, or the place where you get lost?

Another means of transport in the north is used only in winter. This is towing sleds with a caterpillar tractor, which can chug its way happily through the snow over frozen lakes. Or almost always:

"Driving a bulldozer caterpillar tractor on Flin Flon Lake, 20 miles southeast of Flin Flon, Arnold Mansell suddenly found himself at the bottom in 15 feet of water. His companions, Frank Norquay and Max Truckless, managed to reach him when he broke water . . .

". . . Grabbing the huge blocks of ice with his one arm, he held the other out to

Norquay who had worked his way to the edge of the hole. Standing in water up to his knees with Truckless holding his hand from behind, Norquay finally managed to grasp Mansell . . .”

It was lucky for Arnold Mansell that his two friends had been riding a sleigh behind the “cat.”

#### *THINGS TO DO:*

1. Both of these stories were originally

written up for the Winnipeg papers by Tommy Dobson, who owns the Flin Flon “Daily Reminder.” Keep an eye on your newspaper for stories like these, and make a small collection.

2. We couldn’t find a picture for the second story, for there wasn’t time for any of the men to stand around taking photographs. Maybe you can draw one for yourself.

# UNIT VI: LIVING IN FLIN FLON

If five people got stuck in an elevator, they would get to know one another quite well. They would have to pass the time together. Never mind if Mr. Holowachuk had been on his way to play golf; he would have to forget that. And Mrs. Klein would have to forget her visit to the theatre, just as Mr. Nicola would have no use for his fishing rod for that day at least. Dr. Szabo wouldn't be able to help his patient after all, and Miss Jenkin's cat would just have to miss its cat food until tomorrow. The five of them would have to while away the time.

This is what happens when people find themselves thrown together on a long train journey. For example, the long eight-day train ride across Siberia usually ends with some life-long friendships, formed after days of playing chess or cards together or just chatting. Ships have the same effect.

Living in a town like Flin Flon, not too small and not too large, and far from any other town, means that people have to rely on one another for their entertainment and social activities.

The result is a large number of clubs and organizations. The usual ones are all there: the Elks, the Rotarians, the Kinsmen, the Legion, and so on. There are Bonspiels, hockey tournaments, and after-school clubs. All these help to make life in Flin Flon, or so the Flin Flonners insist, far more exciting and friendly than anywhere in the world.

## QUESTIONS:

1. What do you think is the right size for a town? Why?
2. What can be done to give the same effect in a big city like Winnipeg?

## THINGS TO DO:

1. You will need an atlas for this one. Trace the Trans-Siberian Railway on a map all the way from Moscow to Vladivostok. How long is it? Then trace the CNR and CPR routes across Canada and compare their lengths. Show how you could go all the way around the world by train using only two boat trips.
2. Find out all you can about organizations such as the Rotary Club and the Kinsmen. See how many such clubs there are in your community. You might ask people, or take a look around for yourselves.

## *A Flin Flon miner's family*

In our picture, figure 46, Mr. and Mrs. Ray Kinsley are celebrating their 25th wedding anniversary. How can you tell?

On the left is Donna (15) and then comes Fae (22). At the far right is Jack (21) and then there is Gerald. How old do you think Gerald is? The oldest boy,



FIGURE 46.

Brian, is away in Alberta at the University of Calgary. Soon he is going to Africa to work as a teacher.

Only Gerald still lives in Flin Flon with his parents. Donna is staying with a family in Winnipeg, because she wanted a "change." She is enjoying her new school there. Fae is married and also lives in Winnipeg. Jack, too, is in Winnipeg, at the University of Manitoba.

The family live in Birchview. (Find this suburb on the Flin Flon map, page 33.) Their house is one of the oldest in the area. Mr. Kinsley bought it when it was just a two-room house, and gradually added more rooms and a basement. Many

people in Flin Flon have added to their homes like this.

We asked why they still lived in an older home.

"Well, we never intended it to be a permanent home, but the family seems to like it." There can't be any better reason for staying in a house than that.

Mr. Kinsley took up mining in 1939, for the HBM&SC. He has never worked underground because he is an engineer. Only Jack has been down the mines. Jack worked in the Flin Flon mine and in the Snow Lake mines during his summer vacation. He was saving his money to go to the University.

Before becoming a miner, Mr. Kinsley worked in the fur trade. His job was to haul supplies up into the north to the trappers. He was the first man to get a horse team to the northern end of Reindeer Lake. Find Reindeer Lake in your atlas.

Both Mr. and Mrs. Kinsley were born and raised on farms not far from Brandon in southern Manitoba. So Mr. Kinsley has worked in three of Manitoba's most important industries. What are they?

The Kinsley's like most Flin Flonners, are sports addicts. Mr. Kinsley has been training ball players and hockey players for years. "Every summer we go out and lick the youngsters," he says. "You see, we've trained them so we know how to trick them!" Jack played for the Bombers before leaving Flin Flon.

Big brother Brian is sure that Gerald is going to be the "real star of the family," however. He is already a dangerous ball player and hockey player.

The girls? "Oh, they were singers. In the choir, both of them."

We wondered if the family kept any pets? "No, but Gerald wants a dog. I guess he'll get one. He's bought the leash already!"

Where can you meet the Kinsleys? Square dancing, every Wednesday night.

## QUESTIONS:

1. Why do you think so many Flin Flonners are sports fans?
2. Find out, by looking at Unit I what other pastimes Flin Flon families might have.

## *Flin Flon's problems*

A good citizen is an honest citizen. Being an honest citizen means facing up to *all* the problems that exist, and not just turning on the TV and forgetting all about them. It means more than just that; it means that you must try to understand the problems of your community, and to think of solutions. Sometimes being a good citizen may make you unpopular, but that can't be helped.

Flin Flonners have quite a few things to think about. We shall just look at some of these before going away to look at our own.

### *A. The cost of living*

This is something that worries people everywhere.

1. Make a list of what you spend during a week.
2. Ask how much is spent *on* you during a week.
3. Add a list of some of the other things that a family must buy in a week.
4. What taxes do they pay?

Then you will have some idea of what the cost of living means. For an isolated town like Flin Flon, would you expect the cost of living to be higher or lower than for Winnipeg?

Actually, food is hardly any more expensive than in Winnipeg, even though it all has to be trucked or flown in. There are two reasons for this:

1. The wholesalers in Flin Flon, the

companies that provide supplies for small stores and even supermarkets, wait for "bargain offers" from their suppliers in Winnipeg and elsewhere. If canned peas are going cheap, they will buy a large quantity, and then just enough each month to keep up their supplies until the next "bargain offer" comes along.

2. The suppliers take less profit for themselves, so that they won't lose customers in this small but valuable market.

(Maybe you have a deep-freeze. If not, ask someone who has to tell you how they can "save" money by owning a deep-freeze.)

Electric power for heating your home is not really more expensive in Flin Flon. In

FIGURE 47.



fact it seems to be cheaper than in some parts of Manitoba.

Electricity for a Flin Flonner does seem quite expensive. Some townspeople say this is because the HBM&SC owns the Island Falls power plant, and that they charge the town more than they should. The company says that this isn't true. Perhaps you can find out about arguments like this in your community?

### ***B. Isolation***

Look at figure 47 and then answer the following questions.

1. What kind of room is this?
2. Have you seen TV programs "live" from places like Montreal?
3. Do you watch the news on TV? If so, you will have seen pictures of things happening around the world only a day after they happened.

In Flin Flon most programs on TV are about a week late. This is because there is no live TV link with the big cities of the south.

And in some small towns in the north there is no TV at all. This makes the people of Flin Flon feel isolated.

There are other things that make them feel isolated. Just for a change, most people like to go shopping somewhere different. If you live in Flin Flon, there really isn't anywhere else.

In a big city like Winnipeg, it is easy to change your job. But in Flin Flon, it would probably mean going away. A lot of Flin Flonners do leave, especially the young people. Why do you think young

people leave Flin Flon? Or, for that matter, why do they often leave any small or isolated community?

The place shown in figure 48 isn't Flin Flon. How could you tell just by looking at the picture? It is Snow Lake, a new mining town built by the HBM&SC for the people who work in their new mines around Snow Lake. The company has moved many families from Flin Flon to Snow Lake, so that they won't have to travel so far to work.

There is another reason why the population of Flin Flon hasn't been growing in the last few years. This is because wages have been higher for miners and lumber workers in such provinces as British Columbia and Ontario. Many people have left because of this. The Company has had to look for workers from as far away as Quebec. Why would people come from Quebec but not from British Columbia? The Flin Flonners say that this change means that families have gone, and that the new workers are single men. They say that perhaps the town is turning into a mining camp again.

## QUESTIONS:

1. Find out some of the things that have been given to your community by different companies and people. This should be easy, for they often bear the name of the man who made the gift.
2. Why might young people be more ready to leave for a better-paying job in another province than older people?



FIGURE 48.

3. Why would some people *not* want to leave Flin Flon, even though they could get better wages somewhere else? You might read back over the last three chapters to get some ideas.

## Summary

We would like to tell you some more stories about Flin Flon and the Canadian north. But it is time to sit back and think.

1. In what ways is Flin Flon typical of all towns in northern Manitoba?
  - a) In the jobs people do?
  - b) In the way they enjoy themselves?
  - c) In the sort of people who live there?
  - d) In the problems they have?
  - e) In the number of people who live there?

2. In what ways is Flin Flon different from other towns in northern Manitoba?
3. Is Flin Flon just a mining town?
4. What makes it more than just a mining town? Or even a mining and smelting town?
5. In what ways is life in Flin Flon the same as life in a suburb of Winnipeg?
6. In what ways is city life different from life in Flin Flon? And how would you explain these differences?
7. People are all the same in some ways. But each one of us is a separate person with something different to offer to the world. Do you think that there is such a person as a typical person? And is there really such a thing as a typical town, or farm? We don't know.

If you haven't been to Flin Flon  
make sure that you see it some day.

We liked it very much.

Dr. Jones

Mrs. Jones

and Carlyle Glean, who is from  
Grenada in the West Indies.



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